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EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND

In order to understand the changes brought about by the Communists in the educational system of China, it is necessary to review the background of educational development under the Nationalist regime.

Chapter II, Article 11, of the Nationalist Constitution promulgated in 1946 states that the "people have freedom of speech, [freedom for the] pursuit of knowledge, and [freedom of] publication." Article 21 of the same chapter further spells out the principle of education by stating that the "people have the right as well as the duty to receive basic education." Interpretations of these broad principles are found in Chapter XIII, which specifies, among other things, that the purpose of education includes the development of the spirit of nationalism, and that both public and private educational institutions are subject to government supervision according to law.[1]

Nationalist official singled out two of the most controversial points for further elaboration.

1. Chung-kuo Chiao-yü Nien-chien 1948, [Educational Yearbook of China 1948], Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1948, pp. 23-24.

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II. MAJOR CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE COMMUNISTS

A. Basic Policy

Mao Tse-tung stated in On New Democracy that, "A specific culture is the ideological reflection of the political and economic activities of a specific society."[5] In molding a culture for the "new China," Mao believed that education would be successful if it contained "scientific substance, oriented toward the masses, and adapted to suit China's nationalism."[6] This principle of education was incorporated into the Common Program of 1949 which constituted the basis of the Communist Constitution promulgated in 1954. Article 41 of the Common Program states that the purpose of education is "to elevate the level of the people's culture, to prepare personnel for national reconstruction, to eradicate the thoughts of feudalism, compradorism,[7] and Fascism, and to develop the spirit of service to the people." To apply this basic policy to education, Article 47 of the same

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5. Mao Tse-tung, Mao Tse-tung Hsüan-chi [Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung], Vol II, Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, p. 666.

6. Hsia Feng, Hsiao-hsüeh Chiao-shih Shou-ts'e [Handbook for Primary School Teachers], Shanghai, Wen-hua ch'u-pan-she, 1953, p. 8.

7. Comprador - a native agent employed by a foreign establishment (commercial houses, etc.) in China, to have charge of its native employees.

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document further specifies that "education must be systematically popularized; secondary and advanced education must be strengthened; technical education must be emphasized; spare-time education for laborers and cadres must be stressed; and revolutionary political education must be given to both young and old intellectuals."[8]

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These pronouncements became the guiding light for the Communists in their effort to revamp the educational system of China until the promulgation of the Constitution in 1954. In reality, the new Constitution has nothing to add to or subtract from the principles already in practice. Article 94 of the Constitution says that "Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to education. To guarantee enjoyment of this right, the state establishes and gradually extends the various types of educational institutions. The state pays special attention to the physical and mental development of young people." The next article in the Constitution "safeguards the freedom of citizens to engage in scientific research, literary and artistic creation and other cultural activity." These are innocuous statements of commonly accepted principles. Reiteration of these principles in the Constitution, however, provides

8. Jen-min Shou-ts'e, 1950 [People's Handbook, 1950], Shanghai, Ta-kung pao, 1950, Section B, p. 9.

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the Communists once more with the opportunity to clarify their educational aims which are "to develop a socialist China." 871 642

Attention must be given to the gradual shift of emphasis from 1949 to the present in the Communist basic policy for education. At the beginning of the Communist regime, the central theme was to bring to reality a "New Democracy" in education. By this the Communists meant that petit bourgeois and national capitalist classes would still be tolerated on a level with the proletariat. Soon afterwards the Communists made it amply clear that a constant effort was to be made to root out every trace of thought and action in education that did not conform to strict proletarian socialism, Russian style. There have been numerous articles auguing whether there is any difference between the principles of the New Democracy and the socialist principles of education.[9] Apparently the final word on this question was pronounced by an article in People's Education, an official organ of the Ministry of Education since May 1, 1951, which said: "The present stage is no longer the same as the New Democracy stage. We have to not only establish a socialist system of thought for the educators and students (which was the central mission under the New Democracy principle), 871

9. See articles on this subject in Jen-min Chiao-yü [People's Education], Peking, June 1953, April 1954, and June 1954 issues.

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After convening of the People's Congress at all levels, the provincial governments were busy with census-taking, the registration of voters, elections, meetings of the hsiang congress and congress of the municipality, and the election of the delegates to be sent to the congress on the next higher level. On September 15, 1954, the National People's Congress met for the first time, and on September 20, 1954, the new Constitution was passed. The principles of organization for provincial governments and local governments were formulated. A statute for the organization of the local People's Congress on all levels and the local People's Council was published, followed by the election of new chairmen and of the members of the provincial government.

A. The Provincial Government

In the post-Constitution period, the provincial governments have been placed on a new basis. Each province has the status of an administrative district under the supervision of the Central People's Government, according to Chinese political tradition. However, there is a point of departure from the traditional system, in that some members of the provincial government are elected locally (see below) and a Provincial People's Congress has a share in the deliverative functions. The term "legislative" which is applied to the National Congress in Peking, does not appear in the section of the Constitution formulating the principles of organization for the provincial government. As a result, the Provincial People's Congress is limited to the function of a deliberative body. Thus each province, according to Article 53 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, becomes an administrative district